

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 080582
ORIGIN NODS-00

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DRAFTED BY S/AS:R KELLEY
APPROVED BY S/AS:AMB SMITH
EUR/WE:MR DOBBINS (SUBS)
S/S: LRFLEISCHER

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

S E C R E T STATE 080582

NODIS
CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MNUC, PARM, SF

SUBJECT: FRENCH REPLY TO SOVIET NOTE ON SOUTH AFRICAN
-- NUCLEAR SITUATION

REF: STATE 69192

1. FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICER BRIEFED US ON FRENCH REPLY TO
SOVIET MESSAGE ON SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR SITUATION. FRENCH
REPLY WAS CONTAINED IN A "VERBAL MESSAGE" FROM GISCARD TO
BREZHNEV ON MARCH 24.

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2. FRENCH EMBASSY OFFICER DESCRIBED CONTENTS OF FRENCH
REPLY AS FOLLOWS: (HE MADE AN INFORMAL ORAL TRANSLATION
FROM WHAT WAS APPARENTLY THE TEXT OF THE FRENCH REPLY.)

A. WE BELIEVE, AS DOES THE USSR THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO
TAKE WHATEVER ACTION IS REQUIRED TO PREVENT SOUTH AFRICA

FROM ACQUIRING NUCLEAR WEAPONS. SUCH ACTION WAS TAKEN
IN AUGUST 1977.

B. WE DO NOT HAVE KNOWLEDGE OF ANY NEW FACTS THAT CONTRA-
DICT THE COMMITMENT SOUTH AFRICA HAS MADE TO PURSUE PEACE-
FUL NUCLEAR ENERGY PROGRAMS. WE WOULD BE VERY INTERESTED

IN ANY MORE PRECISE DATA THAT SOVIET ORGANIZATIONS MIGHT
HAVE THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS USING ITS NUCLEAR PROGRAM FOR
MILITARY GOALS.

C. WE ARE ACTING ON A PERMANENT BASIS AND VERY CAREFULLY
TO PREVENT SOUTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS.
WE ARE CONVINCED THAT STATES LIKE FRANCE AND THE USSR ARE
SINCERELY TRYING TO PREVENT THE FABRICATION OF NUCLEAR
WEAPONS BY SOUTH AFRICA.

D. WE HAVE ORIENTED OUR ACTIONS SO AS TO STRENGTHEN CON-
TROLS ON SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PLANTS. WE PREFER THIS
APPROACH TO INTERRUPTING NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH SOUTH
AFRICA. ANY RUPTURE OF SUCH NUCLEAR COOPERATION, WHICH
IS AFTER ALL SAFEGUARDED BY THE IAEA, COULD LEAD PRETORIA
TO AUTARCHIC BEHAVIOR ON A DANGEROUS PATH. WITHOUT
NUCLEAR COOPERATION WITH SOUTH AFRICA WE WILL NOT HAVE THE
MEANS TO DETER PRETORIA FROM SUCH A PATH.

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3. IN SEPARATE MEETING UK EMBASSY OFFICER INFORMED US
THAT THE UK HAS NOT YET REPLIED TO THE SOVIET MESSAGE.
HE ANTICIPATES A REPLY WILL BE MADE IN THE NEXT SEVERAL
DAYS AND HE UNDERSTANDS THAT THE UK REPLY IS EXPECTED TO
CLOSELY PARALLEL THE U.S. RESPONSE.

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Message Attributes

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